

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)."

The Rev. J. Henry Skewes's *Sir John Franklin: A Revelation* was noticed in these columns in a way which, I regret to think, did not give unmixed satisfaction to the reverend author. That, however, is a detail. It is the business of a reviewer to deal frankly and fearlessly with a book submitted to him, without harshness and also without favour. This was done in Mr. Skewes's case, and his characteristic and curious rejoinder had full and, perhaps, unkind publicity. It will be remembered that I took exception only to the mass of irrelevant padding introduced into the narrative and to the absence of attestation by witnesses who are still living. One name that was mentioned in the book, with very circumstantial detail of alleged fact, was that of Captain, now Admiral Sir Leopold M'Clintock. It will interest my readers to see what the Admiral says as to so much of the story as concerns himself. He addresses the following letter—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"SIR,—In your issue of the 9th inst. you notice 'a strange tale of handwriting on the wall,' and you mention my name in connection with it, therefore I am induced to trouble you with this letter for insertion. Quoting, I presume, from the 'strange tale,' you give your readers to understand that my voyage in the *Fox* in 1857-59, was in obedience to definite instructions from Lady Franklin to follow the route defined in the 'revelation.' The whole story of the 'Londonderry vision' is so ridiculous that I hesitate to notice it. However, were I to remain silent, perhaps some people might be willing to believe that my course was in some degree influenced by it. Therefore I write to say that Lady Franklin gave me no instructions, and for the following reason:—In 1854 information reached England that our lost countrymen had been seen on the west coast of King William Island, travelling towards the Great Fish River. Thereupon Government despatched an expedition down that river in 1855. It proved unequal to the task of exploring King William Island; the necessity for doing so remained, and the determination of my route was thus settled for me by these plain, matter-of-fact discoveries. No other 'revelations' whatever had anything to do with it. In the early days of the Franklin search there were clairvoyants, visions, dreams and revelations in the greatest abundance—a large number came from America. They 'saw' Franklin's ships in all parts of the Arctic regions, nor did those spirit manifestations cease so long as a doubt remained. In 1858 one such oracle gave the date of Franklin's death as being May 2nd of that year—about eleven years after his actual death. Lady Franklin was deluged with these 'revelations.' She courteously listened to all, but was influenced by none of them. There was no sort of mystery or secrecy observed about any of them. I have yet to learn that any one attached the slightest value to any of them, and least of all the practical people who shared in either the counsels of the Arctic commanders or in the confidence of Lady Franklin; nor do I think the public will suffer themselves to be duped by this 'strange story' now.

"You also say that Lady Franklin was convinced of the truth of the 'revelation,' and therefore directed the voyage of the

*Prince Albert* in accordance with it! That vessel was directed to steer southward from Barrow Strait, simply because all other possible routes were already occupied by the Government and other powerful expeditions, numbering nine vessels. In 1850-51 Lady Franklin's great anxiety was to have Wellington Channel explored northwards from the Franklin traces discovered at its southern end; it was not until this field of search was provided for that she directed the *Prince Albert* to steer southward into Prince Regent's Inlet.

"The rev. gentleman who has launched this most 'strange tale' must indeed be an inflexible doubter of plain and well-established and published facts to do so in the face of them.—Very faithfully yours,

"F. LEOPOLD M'CLINTOCK, Admiral.

"3, Atherstone-terrace, S.W., May 11th."

Notorious in life, Washington Irving Bishop threatens to become even more notorious in death. His death was announced in "LIGHT" last week, and now the newspapers are full of hints that he was not dead when the doctors performed the autopsy. Such paragraphs as these are plentiful:—

"A great sensation has been made in New York by a claim of Mrs. Bishop, the wife of the mind-reader, that her husband's body was dissected while he was in a cataleptic state. She claims that he had previously lain for forty-eight hours in the same condition, and that the physicians really killed him by their haste to get his brain. The autopsy was performed so hurriedly that neither relatives nor friends heard of his supposed death until it was too late to warn the surgeons. Mr. Bishop had left directions that his body was not to be opened or buried until it began to decompose, as he was always haunted by the fear of being buried or killed while in a fit. Many of his friends refuse to believe he was dead, and his wife talks freely about the whole matter, insisting that he was murdered, and wants to make a great scandal of it. The physicians justify the hasty autopsy by the certainty that he was dead, and by the scientific interest in such an extraordinary brain."

To an unprofessional critic it does seem very strange that "scientific interest in an extraordinary brain," should be regarded as sufficient cause for cutting up his body without consulting his relatives. This strange procedure is rendered more strange still by the fact that is now published. Not only would the mother and wife of Bishop have opposed the autopsy, but they strenuously maintain that he was not dead when it was performed, but only in a cataleptic state. This is a very ghastly suggestion, and I sincerely hope that it is only imaginary.

The latest news at the time of writing is embodied in the following paragraph which I extract from the *Daily Telegraph* (May 18th). It will be seen that a coroner's jury has the question before it, and we must await the decision. Mr. Bishop seems to have inherited his liability to catalepsy from his mother. There were reasons, known to those who have followed the later part of his strange career, why his death causes no surprise:—

"Intense interest prevails at New York in regard to the painful circumstances connected with the death of Mr. Irving Bishop, the thought-reader. A Reuter's telegram of yesterday's date reports: 'The relatives of Mr. Irving Bishop have asked for an official investigation into the circumstances attending his death, insisting that he was alive at the time the autopsy was made. The funeral has therefore been postponed.' To this a later despatch

adds: 'A coroner's inquiry was opened to-day to ascertain whether Mr. Bishop died in consequence of a cataleptic seizure or under the dissecting knife. In the meantime, the physicians who conducted the autopsy, including Mr. Irwin, formerly of the Royal Free Hospital in London, have been admitted to bail. The counsel who appeared for the widow of the deceased at the inquest contended that even if no crime had been committed it was a misdemeanour to make a postmortem examination without the coroner's consent. The inquiry was adjourned.' Mr. Bishop's mother has related the following story of her own early life to corroborate the theory that her son was probably alive at the time of the dissection. She says: 'I am subject to the same cataleptic trances in which my boy often fell. One can hear and see everything, but both speech and movement are paralysed. Some years ago I was in a trance for six days, and I saw the arrangements being made for my burial. Only my brother's determined resistance prevented them from embalming me; and I lay there and heard it all. On the seventh day I came to myself, but the agony I had endured left its mark for ever.' It is stated that Mr. Bishop carried in his pocket a card recording the facts in regard to his own liability to catalepsy; and, in addition, he had warned all his relatives and friends. In New York several specialists have given their opinion that Mr. Bishop was most probably dead; but the feeling against the surgeons who performed the autopsy is that it was conducted without the assent of the relatives, which, as it now seems, would certainly have been withheld. This serious complaint would still hold, even if it be decided, as there is reason to hope, that death had actually occurred before the dissection took place."

It is further stated that:—

"The proceedings before the coroner on Saturday revealed simply a technical violation of the law, Dr. Irwin, in defence, pleading ignorance. A second examination of the body was ordered by the coroner, and resulted merely in the discovery that all the organs were in a healthy state, and that it was impossible to ascribe his death to any specific cause or to say whether or not Mr. Bishop was alive or dead at the time of the first autopsy. The undertakers who took charge of the body after death say that there is no doubt whatever that he was dead, for when they removed the body they observed the usual evidences of decomposition, and in a very marked degree. They placed the body in an ordinary air-tight box, where it remained till the autopsy. It would have been impossible for any one to remain alive in the box. Dr. Robertson, a well known physician here, who frequently attended Mr. Irving Bishop in his former illness, says that air is as necessary to a man in a trance as at any other time, and that if Mr. Bishop was in a trance or fit when put into the box he must have been suffocated. He says, 'I saw Bishop go into two cataleptic fits in my office while consulting me. The first time was after an operation, and five hours passed before I could restore him to consciousness. The second fit was less severe. I believe he was dead at the time of the first dissection.' Other eminent medical men express the same opinions. It is said that Dr. Irwin had an understanding with the deceased that if he was near at the time of his death, he was to examine the brain to see if he could find any explanation of the thought-reader's mysterious powers, which he himself said he was not able to understand. Dr. Irwin says that Mr. Bishop was morbidly anxious that people should be convinced that he really possessed a mysterious power, and was not a mere trickster. His mother declares, on the contrary, that her son had a horror of dissection, and left positive written orders that there should be no autopsy. No such document has been found."

The recent *Conversazione* of the Royal Society was a very interesting one. It is not outside of my province to draw attention to the light thrown on the vastness of the universe by some late photographs of some parts of the heavens. To state the facts I cannot do better than quote from a leading article in the *Daily Telegraph*:—

"At this *conversazione* of the Royal Society, Mr. Isaac Roberts exhibited a set of photographs demonstrating how incredibly little the naked eye reveals to us of the wonders of the firmament. Mr. Roberts took a small patch of the constellation of the Swan—a little area of the heavens where Argelander, in making his famous chart, could detect with the telescope only 170 stars, and in that single constellation his apparatus revealed 16,200 bars of light. Applying this to the whole celestial sphere, instead of the 350,000 stellar worlds of which the astronomers of the last generation knew, we to-day have no fewer than 160,000,000, with the almost perfect certainty that at least another 160,000,000, now unseen, will come in to view with the use of instruments of higher power. Furthermore, pictures were displayed of the nebulae in Orion, of the Pleiades, Andromeda, and Vulpecula, the teach-

ing of which is that until these wondrous objects have been thus pictured by their own light no idea can be formed of their real character. The keen glance of the camera, plunging into space, sees and reports, upon the magical sensitiveness of the prepared plate, all these unknown though not unsuspected worlds around us. Up to the sixth magnitude a good eye may behold and count them; from the sixth to the thirteenth there leap others into view, called therefore 'telescopic stars.' Great glasses, like that mounted on the Lick Observatory, in California, add lower magnitudes to the heavenly host; but the vision of the photographic lens, as we have shown, multiplies them by thousands, and a new meaning is so given to the Philosopher's reverence—a new majesty to the line of that old English poet who wrote, 'Man is one Universe, and hath Another to attend him.'"

It is a bewildering and yet elevating thought; and its outcome is excellently put in another passage from the same article:—

"The extremely learned and patient men to whom we owe such great revelations are for the most part deficient in scientific imagination. Like map-makers who never travel, like ship-builders who never put to sea, they do not know how to interpret adequately the marvels of their own researches. It is ludicrous to the poet and the philosopher to hear them arguing that there can be no life in the moon because she has no water and no air, or to read their grave disquisitions upon the inconvenience which gravity would cause to any creatures upon Uranus, or how the atmosphere of Jupiter must prove hard to breathe, being, if it exists, fifty times as dense as platinum; or how Saturn and Herschel must be of some stuff like jelly or bladdery pumice-stone, and therefore uninhabitable for serious and solid people. Far more probable must it be held that where visible forms of locality are so numerous and various, invisible but real forms of vitality must be equally universal. To consider that life is limited to this one little speck and islet of the universe, and that those millions of worlds seen around us are sterile, silent, and unpeopled, is as if the savages of an atoll in the Pacific were to possess a map of the globe and to mark all but their own petty patch of coral rock 'uninhabitable.'"

To the Spiritualist it is unthinkable that these millions of orbs should not be instinct with life in some form or other. Life is not necessarily only of the types with which we are familiar in this world. To state this proposition is to make us wonder how the converse of it ever came to be accepted. Yet one man at least of eminence occurs to my mind as having seriously regarded this world as the sole theatre of immortal life, because it was the scene of the life and crucifixion of the Lord of Life. The moral drawn by the writer in the *Telegraph* is not the least striking part of a very striking article, the whole of which I should like to reprint if I had room:—

"The moment, however, that we admit this probability and conceive of life as present and steadfastly evolving upon some, or most, or even upon all of these stars, suns, planets, and asteroids, our theories of creation, our theologies, our moralities, our estimates of the origin, duties, and destinies of man and all created beings must expand indefinitely. Just as the photographic star-map underlines and emphasises the words of Kant, so the multiplication of the visible universe adds extraordinary significance to those still more lofty words, 'In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you.' Already we know from the laws of physics that each member of all those starry galaxies influences all other members far and near, and is in turn influenced. Is gravitation universal, and must not higher and finer links and interplays exist? May it not reasonably be believed that we can perceive as yet of the uprise and glory and boundlessness of life just as much and as little as of the origin, and nature, and boundlessness of these mansions? The limits of our perception are wide enough for faith, not for certainty; yet how strange must be considered the race of man, and especially of astronomical man, which will take it on the word of a camera-lens that there are three hundred million more suns in the sky than he knew of, and will not take it on the word of the irrepressible instinct of his soul that beyond death there are as many forms of new existence—and more!"

*The Two Worlds* has a paper from Captain Pfoundes which contains much that is interesting. I extract a passage that interests Spiritualists:—

"To Spiritualists it will be of interest to know that much of what is now openly advocated by their leaders is Buddhism pure



and simple—temperance in diet, abstinence from stimulants and coarse food, vegetarianism, kindness, gentleness, courtesy, charity, all the Christian virtues included. In Buddhism, as in Christianity, the innumerable sects practise certain observances, and appear to hold doctrines that may at first appear parallel, and much that is neither lofty nor pure; but it would be altogether wrong to term such Buddhism—any more than the fantastic sectarianism we witness nearer home, true Christianity. Many of the Buddhist writings, made accessible to the ordinary reader, are canons intended for the guidance of the priesthood, and not for the laity, and should be understood as such. There may be some room for discussion as to what the Gautama Buddha did teach, some grounds for doubt whether the *Shastra* or canons and Sutra (or Sutta) or Discourses are the exact principles expounded by him; but there can be no doubt that they are in accordance with the opinions of the teachers and followers of Buddhism centuries before; and there is evidence of the leading principles, the basis of the ethical code, being derived from much more ancient sources. To make the doctrines intelligible to the laity, they have received stereotyped forms, that require some explanation in these later times; and we find arbitrary groupings, for which there is reason, having the older philosophical systems as a foundation.

"The longing after immortality, common to humanity in every land and in all ages, undoubtedly the outcome of the innate instinctive knowledge of the spiritual potentialities of intellectual development, appears throughout Buddhism; and the desire to solve the great mysteries of existence—the whence? and whither?—prompted inquiry into physical and then on to psychological phenomena."

"Buddhism is wrongly accused of being atheistic, agnostic, soulless; but the peoples of the earth, amongst some of whom it has been the prevailing creed for twenty-four centuries past, and the majority of the populous countries of Eastern Asia, for more than half that period, have ever been most highly spiritualistic and civilised."

As a detail I find myself mildly, wondering why Gautama Buddha should have double the number of "d's" that his faith is now to have. I have always spelt the name of Buddha's religion Buddhism, and I have understood that Buddhism is not the same thing but the name of the Wisdom-religion lately introduced to us. In the new number of *Lucifer*, among a terrible list of 'Dont's,' I am thus adjured: 'Don't call Madame H. P. Blavatsky a Buddhist or a Buddhaist, but a Budhist,' yet I am told further, "Don't fancy that the higher teachings of Buddhism can be grasped by an ordinary mind." What then is the saving value of that second d? How does Buddhism differ from Buddhism?

### SPIRITISM AND CREDULITY.

While the reaction against Materialism, the assertion of spirit, is increasing rapidly in France generally; while at Salpêtrière and at Nancy, French physicians of the highest rank are getting towards the borderland where mind and matter seem to merge in one; while all this is going on among those to whom the word Spiritist may even still be an abomination, the French Spiritist himself seems gradually to be becoming less and less in touch with the intellectual march of the age, and to be developing into a worshipper of Alan Kardec, who has been placed at the head of a kind of mutual admiration society. This mutual admiration society revels in funeral orations, and perhaps from that cause has less time for the investigation of truth than it would otherwise have; hence the amazing assertions of French Spiritist journals from time to time.

It is not so very long ago that attention was called in "LIGHT" to an assertion regarding the Queen, which assertion itself should have borne evidence of its falsehood to anyone in the smallest degree conversant with the customs of the English Court. Now, in the *Revue Spirite* for May 1st, we have an account of a papyrus found in the hand of a mummy. This mummy is that of "Mouna-Séhéré, the daughter of the Pharaohs." Passing by the chronology of Egypt, to which two pages are devoted, we come to the story of Mouna Séhé's initiation as a priestess of *Bast*. Some sort of description of the various stages of initiation is given, and then it seems that the lady had

to give a lecture to the assembled hierarchy of *Bast*, and she chose for her subject, "The primordial æther"! And these are some of the things she said: "I will begin by saying that there is nothing in the worlds [note the plural] but one unique power or force called æther; it is that which enlightens, it is that which acts. . . . it is that which brings together, unites and arranges the molecules of all kinds; without it nothing would exist, and with it everything can exist." Then the initiate proceeds to dilate upon the energy of this fluid. "It is the great motive power," she says, and "lights up the suns," (again the plural) "for the suns are but emanations of this fluid"; in medicine it is the universal panacea, and this is "the only part of the subject that I wish to sketch out to-day," and with pleasing ingenuousness she adds: "As this technical part of my subject cannot be committed to writing, I cannot transcribe it here," and so this irritating mummy has deprived us of what *might* have been of transcendent value and importance. The *Revue Spirite* then says that this account given by Mouna Séhé proves that thousands of years before the Christian era, Spiritism was known and scientifically practised. Then follow six pages of notes on ancient Egypt, very instructive, no doubt, but having nothing in the world to do with the primordial æther, or the evidence that the papyrus and its contents were genuine. Surely the plural form in "worlds" and "suns," to say nothing of "molecules," should have made the editor suspicious from a curious resemblance to the same words as they occur in modern lucubrations, even if the story of Pharaoh's daughter lecturing on the primordial æther—the word *primordial* is used by the lady—had not been enough to make him at once reject the whole thing.

But this primordial æther runs into 150 odd pages in a book called *Les Origines et les Fins, cosmogonie sous la dictée de trois dualités différentes de l'Espace*. "This strange work," as he very properly calls it, is presented to the public by M. Eugène Nus, who seems to have hesitated, as well he might, before he delivered it to a confiding public. The legend at the beginning of the book is this:—

"Three mothers of families living at Lyons, obtained the following pages by mechanical writing, by placing the hands of one upon those of the others."

And these hands then poured out a series of "dictées," in which Mr. Sinnett and Madame Blavatsky are reproduced in an imperfectly digested state; and elementaries, the astral light, and so forth, are all mixed up with the glorious future of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Surely the following passage in one of the "dictées" should have made M. Nus suspicious. Says the "duality":—

"In what region, under what sky, will take place the birth of this new science of fluids, destined to change the wretched conditions of your present life? It will be on the fertile soil of your France, in the bosom of that generous nation which has known how to pour out its blood and its gold in torrents to win or to bestow freedom; it will be among you that there will be developed the study of the hidden forces of nature." But M. Nus seems as easily convinced as is the editor of the *Revue Spirite*.

Another book, too, from the facile pen of "John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester"!! has just appeared. Surely it is not to be wondered at that French Spiritism is *not* a power in France, and that it is not doing the work it ought to do, and must do to justify its existence. My French friends say that the Spiritist journals do not represent the best Spiritism; but if not, what evidence have we of any other form of it, or are we to look to Georges Ohnet and Emile Zola as its exponents?

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"CONFIDENCE is not always the growth of time. There are minds that meet each other with a species of affinity that resembles the cohesive property of matter, and with a promptitude and faith that only belongs to the purer essence of which they are composed."

## COLERIDGE, SINGER AND SEER: HIS RELATION TO SPIRITUALISM.

"OUR GREATEST LYRIC POET."—*Swinburne*.  
 "SICKLY AND USELESS."—*Ruskin*.

Thirst for fame was the last infirmity of Coleridge's noble mind. He tried to extinguish it, and, perhaps, succeeded. That his fame itself should not be extinguished is important: for *music* and *gymnastic* are elements of national life; and Plato, in his "Laws," decides, wrongly perhaps, that youths should learn the lyre, even against their will. No one knew better than Plato how lofty is the throne, how rich the crown, of a man beloved of the Muses; we may, therefore, heed him when he says that many things have not been by the poets spoken well. Many gifted poets have written what the world would willingly let die; but Coleridge's poems are an imperishable possession, a *Ktema es aei* of the English tongue.

Coleridge has dewy eyes, velvet lips, with locks like little serpents, or the coiling summer sea. He has a profound forehead. His brows jet upward as if the song-tide impulsed them. He is often rapt; but when he sings the notes go up, up into the blue, till you cannot hear them, as they do in the scene where Christabel awakes from her trance:—

"A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
 O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
 Have been the lovely lady's prison."

*Andante sostenuto*, and what a ravishing close! Only a great vocalist can breathe out phrases like that:—

"What if her guardian spirit 'twere?"

He has great culture. As a boy, he graduated in the mysteries of Iamblichus. Plato is a familiar friend. It has been said that he has no passion. Perhaps not; but he is *clothed with fire*! It is his mission to stamp upon injustice; it is his mission in his darkest hour of dejection to sing the most Orphic song of purity that ever winged its way from soul to soul.

Many of his works are actual visions, several are fragmentary, and two—"Religious Musings" and "Ode to the Departing Year"—are inspired on the Christmas Eve of 1794 and 1796 respectively. These facts, taken in connection with the extraordinary manner in which the works of Thomas Lake Harris have been produced, throw a Spiritualistic light on what E. A. Poe called the philosophy of composition. Taken in connection with what we learn from *Spirit Teachings* ("Easter Message"), they throw a Spiritualistic light on the import of Christian festivals.

Coleridge is born in 1772. In 1788 he writes the exquisite lines on "The First Advent of Love"; and the floodgates of song are opened on the world. The "Lines on an Autumnal Evening" are written in early youth; "Religious Musings" and the "Destiny of Nations," in 1794, and "Lewti" in 1795. "Religious Musings" are written on Christmas Eve. What a prophecy of the Golden Age authenticated in this poem!—a prophecy amplified and in the "Epic of the Starry Heavens" of Thomas Lake Harris. What a wail of Æolian loveliness in the lines:—

"But o'er some plain that steameth to the sun,  
 Peopled with death; or where more hideous trade  
 Loud-laughing packs his bales of human anguish;  
 I will raise up a mourning, O ye Fiends!"

Not passion! Wait awhile! In the concluding lines of the "Ode to the Departing Year" he speaks of himself as:—

"Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim  
 God's image, sister of the Seraphim."

Cleansed by Invoking the Furies! This poem is also written on Christmas Eve. Thus on the Christmas Eve of 1794 is heard the first muttering of a tempest which grew into a mæstrom of musical indignation on the Christmas Eve of 1796. Then comes the *annus mirabilis*.

In that year he writes "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel, Part I." In that year he drinks that last burst of music, in the "Ode to France," which is without a parallel in English literature. In 1800 he finishes "Christabel." In 1802 he *prints* some verses called the "Day Dream"; they are supposed to have been written in Germany. This offspring of his Muse Coleridge neglected as completely as Rousseau—*requiescat in pace*—neglected his children: the Foundling Hospital being the *Morning Post*. Trivial in other respects, they introduce us to Coleridge in his *clairvoyant* capacity, and the symptoms deserve our most mesmeric attention:—

"If thou wert here, these tears were tears of light!  
 But from as sweet a vision did I start  
 As ever made these eyes grow idly bright!  
 And though I weep, yet still around my heart  
 A sweet and playful tenderness doth linger,  
 Touching my heart as with an infant's finger."

"My mouth half-open, like a witless man,  
 I saw our couch, I saw our quiet room,  
 Its shadows heaving by the fire-light gloom;  
 And o'er my lips a subtle feeling ran,  
 All o'er my lips a soft and breeze-like feeling—  
 I know not what——"

"Across my chest there lay a weight, so warm!  
 As if some bird had taken shelter there."

These symptoms—which he did not understand—may be taken in connection with what we learn from the "Ode to the Departing Year," "The Pains of Sleep," "Phantom or Fact," and another heavenly "Day Dream." "Christabel, Part II." is written in 1800; intrinsically it belongs to the hypnotic period, as we shall show:—

"But yet for her dear lady's sake  
 I stooped, methought, the dove to take,  
 When lo! I saw a bright green snake  
 Coiled around its wings and neck,  
 Green as the herbs on which it couched,  
 Close by the dove's its head it crouched;  
 And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
 Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!"

That is a hypnotic passage, embodying somnambulistic experience. Indeed this somnambulistic experience is never entirely suspended. Traces of what Plato calls the "old shudder," at the sight of celestial beauty, appear in "Boccaccio's Dream," in 1829.

Let us return to "Kubla Khan," in the central hypnotic period of 1797, and the lonely farmhouse in which it was written. Coleridge says in the preface:—

"In the summer of the year 1797, the author, then in ill-health, had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton."

"The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that, indeed, can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort."

That images are things in that surpassing region to which ecstasy conducts us, and not "airy nothings," is Coleridge's message to the world. This message, too, has been amplified and authenticated in a work already referred to. "Thought is a secretion of the brain," says the physiologist, whereas he ought to have said that thought is accompanied by a secretion of the brain. "Our poetry oozes from us like a gum," says Shakespeare; but Shakespeare was wise, and he did not commit himself to the assertion that poetry is a gum.

On the Christmas before the summer of "Kubla Khan," Coleridge again had had a vision, and written his "Ode to the Departing Year." In the second antistrophe of this



Ode, using the whole power of his genius for language, he describes his vision in these words:—

"Silence ensued,  
Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,  
Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories, shone."

Let us compare this with the utterance of a recent *clairvoyante*:—

"In every human soul is formed first of all a tree of life. This has its roots in the heart, its several kinds of branches expand themselves in the breast, and the tenderest twigs in the brain. The most various kinds of flowers—as roses, lilies, tulips, and the like—and its just as various kinds of fruits show forth from it outside the head in the crown of the rays of righteousness."\*

We think it is Fichte who says (perhaps in his *Way to the Blessed Life*) that we must apply the Hermetic principle in reading the Bible, that it means something and not nothing. And so we must apply the Hermetic principle in reading poetry, that it means something and not nothing. Towards the end of the vision it is very tempestuous roundabout, and, after the vision is over, the poet "prophesies in anguish of spirit the downfall of this country." This anguish he describes:—

"The voice had ceased, the vision fled;  
Yet still I gasped and reeled with dread.  
And ever, when the dream of night  
Renews the phantom to my sight,  
Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs;  
My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start;  
My brain with horrid tumult swims;  
Wild is the tempest of my heart;  
And my thick and struggling breath,  
Imitates the toil of death!"

Then follows a terrific impersonation of the slumbering forces of nature, and the poet, like Balaam, goes his way. We are not informed what the feelings of Balaam were after he had uttered his sublime prophecy and blessing, but Coleridge says:—

"Now I recentre my immortal mind  
In the deep sabbath of meek self-content;  
Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim  
God's Image, sister of the Seraphim."

What does he mean by sabbath of self-content, and what does he mean by vaporous passions? Let us apply the Hermetic principle, and compare what J. B. von Helmont, in his treatise upon the image of the spirit, relates of himself. Three-and-twenty long years having been occupied with large aspirations after knowledge of the soul, he finally, in the year 1633, when he, in the midst of outwardly troubled circumstances, was in a sabbatical mood, saw in a vision his spirit in a human form. "It was a light, absolutely pure, active seeing, a spiritual substance, crystalline, enlightened in its own brightness, but enveloped in another cloudy portion as in its husk, in which I could not distinguish whether it had a brightness from itself, on account of the predominating flashing of the crystalline brightness therein contained."†

"It is a high, solemn, almost awful thought, for every individual man, that his earthly influence, which has had a commencement, will never through all ages, were he the very meanest of us, have an end! What is done, is done, has already blended itself with the boundless, ever-living, ever-working universe, and will also work there, for good or for evil, openly or secretly, throughout all time."—CARLYLE.

"For a man to be able to smile beforehand at all occult sympathies, let alone magical influences, he must find the world very, nay completely, intelligible. But this is only possible if he looks at it with the utterly superficial glance which puts away from it all suspicion that we human beings are immersed in a sea of riddles and mysteries, and have no exhaustive knowledge or understanding either of things or of ourselves in any direct way. Nearly all great men have been of the opposite frame of mind, and, therefore, whatever age or nation they belong to, have always betrayed a slight tinge of superstition."—SCHOPENHAUER'S *Will in Nature*.

\* Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, p. 506.

† Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, p. 504.

## JOTTINGS.

From the *Daily Telegraph* (May 15th):—

"Men of science will welcome with pleasure Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace's *Darwinism* (Macmillan). Except by Mr. Darwin himself, justice has hardly been done to Mr. Wallace, the contemporaneous discoverer of organic evolution, and as much entitled to the honour of it as the author of the *Origin of Species*. The present work is likely to add to an already brilliant reputation. It is particularly valuable, because Mr. Wallace, while enforcing the general theory, maintains his own divergencies from the views of Darwin. He finds that 'the theory of development, even when carried to its extreme logical conclusion, not only does not oppose, but lends a decided support to, a belief in the spiritual nature of man.'"

We hope to give some notice shortly of this remarkable and valuable work, so far as it illuminates our special subject.

Miss Marie Gifford contributes to *The Two Worlds* some account of her early experiences, which we would reproduce did space permit. In the course of her paper she speaks of the frequent presence of spirits of the mighty dead, the Shakespeares, Miltons, and so forth, and adds a wise word to a personal experience of her own:—

"We ourselves had one or two of these experiences. I recollect how, at one of our sittings, 'General Gordon' attempted to communicate with us by automatic means. We thought the opportunity a grand one in which to gain information concerning the fall of Khartoum and his death there. Strange, however, to say, the incident had escaped his memory, and, therefore, he took an abrupt and confused departure. Such rôles as these doubtless afford intense amusement to those spirits imbued with a love of mischief. It is our duty to unmask these personators, and point out seriously the evil which must ensue both to themselves and their mediums from the foolish deceptions they practise."

She speaks further of the warning given to beware of what in *Spirit Teachings* are called the "adversaries," and repeats a warning frequently given in that work against a too frequent sitting for and interest in mere phenomena:—

"The first definite message given to us was to beware of the 'visible and invisible foes ever ready to ensnare the spiritual novice.' We were peremptorily forbidden to communicate with those of the next world when ill in mind or body. To do so was to place ourselves in correspondence with influences undeveloped and undesirable. As I said before, our mediumistic powers were not practically demonstrated to us until long after we had familiarised ourselves with the precepts of Spiritualism."

"We early received a message to the effect that we were to control our interest in phenomenal manifestations, and avoid sitting for such too frequently, as in the first days of developing mediumship we were inclined to do. It was again said that we could not be too careful of ourselves spiritually and physically during the unfoldment of our powers."

The following will be endorsed by all who have gone far in the pursuit of mediumship. The anxious care that good spirits display to prove their honesty and identity is very touching:—

"Those spirits who are really desirous of benefiting us by phenomenal manifestations, are generally ready and anxious to convince us. They see clearly the necessity of demonstrating their separate existence, and invariably find the means to do so. From the outset of our mediumistic careers, we received proof of spirit communion. If two of our party were separated, messages were continually given the one regarding the other, which, in almost every case, were discovered to be correct. One or two little instances may interest the sceptical reader perhaps. Miss C., a lady friend, was obliged to go to the North of England. We did not correspond with her in the meantime, but at one of our private sittings, held some months after her departure, a message was received from a mutual spirit friend to the effect that Miss C. was so ill, mentally and physically, that spirit-communion with her had been impossible for weeks. Other particulars were given. Shortly after this Miss C. returned to London, and on inquiry, the information received was discovered to be perfectly correct."

Can spirits foresee the future? Miss Gifford thinks they can. We agree. Under certain circumstances they do accurately predict. Here are some instances given by Miss Gifford:—

"Out of several prophetic communications made to us and fulfilled, two are worthy, in my opinion, of record. One spirit-sister, when controlling one of us for a writing, foretold very decisively the approaching death of a lady who had acted in the capacity of governess to the family when our sister lived on earth. The message was received with some surprise and incredulity, since Miss F., though advanced in years, was particularly bright and well at the time. Only a few weeks afterwards a letter was received announcing her sudden departure from this world. Again, a great friend of my sister's was taken ill. Her life was despaired of by the doctors in attendance, and even she herself was quite resigned to the belief of her near death. One morning, when sitting alone for control, one of our band was moved to write that the lady in question would not only recover but live for many a future year. Certain instructions and a promise of spiritual aid were added. Scarcely a week had elapsed ere the friend, much to the astonishment of all, began rapidly to mend, and at the time I now write she enjoys as sound health as ever she had in her life."

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## Light :

EDITED BY "M. A. (OXON.)"

SATURDAY, MAY 25th, 1889.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects, good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

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## THE EXCELLENT RELIGION.\*

This is a curious little book, and is a remarkable instance of how a man may utterly fail to follow up his own asserted principles, and at last get landed in a position which is a flat contradiction of those principles. The essay is also curious and interesting as giving a somewhat unexpected development of Agnosticism, especially as it is one of a series of *brochures*, the first of which was from the pen of Mr. Samuel Laing.

The Agnostic is a man, we are told, that "will not say that he knows or believes that which he has no reasonable grounds for knowing or believing." And this Agnostic, in his best form, is also a man who will "in stead-fastness pursue the path which Duty marks with rule and line, and which love and hope adorn with fadeless flowers, till the kindly hand of Death at last shall lift the veil, and the pilgrims shall pass from the shadows and half-lights of Relative Being into the cloudless radiance of that Eternal Reality of which all things now known to sense and sight are but the transient appearance."

It is evident from this that the Agnostic has "reasonable grounds for knowing and believing" not only that Death will lift the veil, but also what will be known when that veil is lifted, "Eternal Reality." Now, says Mr. Griffith-Jones, "of the three props which once supported the theological superstructure—intuition, inspiration, and miracles—not one now remains standing. Intuition has been evaporated into thin air, inspiration has been discredited, and miracles do not happen." This being so, we are led to the conclusion that Mr. Griffith-Jones has arrived at the knowledge that Death will lift the veil, from considerations based upon pure reason, for he must have reasonable grounds, as an Agnostic, for his assertion.

It is all very well to say that "in common with the true Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, and Magian, with the thoughtful and the enlightened of all climes and ages, the true Agnostic, he who feels as well as thinks, confesses reverently and willingly that in all the great faiths of the world there exist, beneath the extrinsic trappings of the churches and sects, those imperishable elements of eternal verity which, for all he knows or would deny, may be the very voice of God speaking in the calm of thought which follows the storm of strife and disputation." Yes, this is

\* *The Excellent Religion*. An Essay by G. C. Griffith-Jones (Lara). (Watts and Co., London).

all very well, especially as a piece of rhetoric, but if intuition has "evaporated into thin air," and "inspiration" is discredited, what, may we ask, is the "voice of God"?

"For all the Agnostic may affirm or deny, that 'blank, impenetrable wall,' which stands at the end of every pathway of intellectual investigation, may be the veil which hides from eyes too weak to bear its glory the supernal splendour of the presence of God. Only to those who affirm that they have penetrated that veil and gazed unblinded upon the Great Beyond, he says: Not so; for no man can do this. Behold thy god—the shadow of thyself cast upon the wall, magnified and dim; the projection of thine egoity, nothing more!" In other words, the Agnostic knows that man cannot look upon God, therefore he knows something about God. Now, intuition and inspiration having been shown to be foolishness, again one asks, How does the Agnostic know this something?—a something so positive that the unknowing Agnostic knows that man would be incapable of its contemplation. And has not Mr. Griffith-Jones unconsciously depicted the Agnostic himself when he says, "Behold thy god—the shadow of thyself cast upon the wall, magnified and dim; the projection of thine own egoity, nothing more!"

At the risk of iteration, we must again quote the definition of an Agnostic as "a man who does not say that he knows or believes that which he has no reasonable grounds for knowing or believing," and let us mark what he is asked to believe, of course, with reasonable grounds for that belief. "What am I?" is the question put, and this is the answer—"Thou art, for thyself, all that is, all that has been, and all that ever shall be. Thy being is a conditioned manifestation of that absolute energy which contains the potentialities of all existence, past, present, and to come," &c., &c. This is pretty well in the light of the Agnostic definition. But let us go on. "Whence do I come?" asks the imaginary aspirant to Agnostic reasoning. "From the infinite abyss of unconditioned absolute hast thou, a conditioned mode amid myriad others, like in kind, but differing in degree, proceeded in virtue of the supreme law of the conditioned, the law of conflict in contrast," &c., &c. "Whither do I go?" asks the agitated querist. "Look around thee; for all existence is eloquent with the answer. The fire clouds floating in the abyss of space evolve into flaming suns and circling planets . . . a million rolling worlds . . . organism succeeds organism . . . triumphant Will grasps the sceptre of Force, and sways the unconscious at its bidding. Of all this thou art the ultimate product and crowning glory" (*O vanitas vanitatum*! even among the Agnostics), and so forth, until we get to a passage which we all feel to be true, but is hardly to be got at without "intuition," "inspiration," or something very like them. "Unless all life is a lie, and all progress a delusion, this truth, at least, shall be true of thee: Where thou shalt leave off there shalt thou begin again."

We began by saying that this is a strange essay, and that the author has managed to reach a goal to which the road on which he starts seems most unlikely to lead. Without inspiration, without intuition, without miracle, by the simple exercise of pure reason, he has developed a God who is "wholly pure and good, who cannot be the author of evil," because "a good god cannot in any sense, direct or indirect, be the author of evil, no, not even of apparent evil, for that is evil to us, and hence the conscious author of that evil is, to us, evil in the measure and degree of the evil as we perceive it." Without inspiration, without intuition, Mr. Griffith-Jones knows what evil is! and talks of the *pitiful* excuses of "free-will," "discipline," and so forth.

And what is this God? "The supreme consciousness, the good principle of existence, working volitionally against the aggregate unconsciousness, and even overcoming it by conversion into consciousness."



Had this been the outcome of the consideration of the Unconscious, of the "Philosophy of Mysticism," though perhaps in any case not easily intelligible, the conclusion would have been a legitimate one, but it is given as the result of that Agnosticism which asserts that a man shall not say "that he knows or believes that which he has no reasonable grounds for knowing or believing." And the "unconditioned absolute," "absolute energy," are talked about glibly as matters of every-day knowledge; of them we have "reasonable grounds" of knowledge or of belief; while "beyond the grave thou canst not see" is as reasonable to this Agnostic as it is to the atheist and the theologian whom he equally condemns. But he cannot keep himself from idols, nevertheless, so he makes a new God, and calls him "Supreme Consciousness."

#### AN EASTER ADDRESS BY REV. M. J. SAVAGE.

(From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.)

[To the addresses of Mr. Heber Newton and Mr. Sidney Dean we now add one from a most fearless thinker and outspoken man. Mr. Savage is no stranger to our readers, and they have long since learned to appreciate his utterances. The indictment of the grosser side of Spiritualism and the denunciation of whatever frauds and immoralities may be connected with it are not new to our readers. We have neither shirked facts nor palliated their existence. The estimate of the higher Spiritualism, its influence, and its probable religious effect on the future is noteworthy as coming from Mr. Minot Savage, and are worthy of record in our columns. Whether our readers agree or not in all that is said, we are sure they will be the better for the perusal of this bold and brave address.—Ed.]

"This is Easter morning. The story has come down to us from the past that 1,856 years ago, at about the rising of the sun, certain of the loving friends of Jesus sought the tomb where they had laid Him, and found it empty. And I suppose that the vast majority of people in Christendom, not having studied the subject very widely, hold the opinion that that was the first Easter morning of the world; that that Easter is Christian, and only Christian, in origin and significance. I have had the question asked me a great many times as to why, not believing in the physical resurrection of Jesus, I celebrate Easter at all. The question betrays ignorance of the fact that the Easter day and the Easter hope are older than Christianity, older perhaps than any Scripture, older than any organised religion of the world. For this hope that

'Life is ever Lord of Death,  
And Love can never lose its own,'

is older than any religion. It is a flower born of human love, and watered by the tears that have been shed on the white faces of the dead.

"Easter, then, is human, a human hope; and all the children of the one Father have an equal right to whatever sunshine and consolation may gather about it.

"A belief that has come to be practically a religion to millions of people in the most civilised countries of the world may rightly claim at least, whatever else may be said about it, to be regarded as one of the 'Signs of the Times.' And this belief is not held by the superstitious, by the ignorant, by the vicious, by the socially reprobated alone. Nor does it find a home among these. For better or worse, it is shared by lawyers, by doctors, by ministers, by philosophers, by men of science, by men in every occupation, in every rank of life. There are believers among the social outcasts of the world, there are believers on thrones, there are believers in palaces, believers among the nobility of every country, believers among diplomats, those engaged in the public service of their respective States. So that for better or worse, as I say, we find this permeating all modern society, in the high places and in the low. And it seems to me significant of one of two things. It is either one of the most hopeful or one of the most lamentable things in all the world. If it be true, then the fact that so many in all walks and ranges

of life have accepted it contradicts neither the brain nor the culture of its adherents. If it be only delusion, contemptible, pitiful, superstition and fraud foisted upon so many, then it seems to me one of the saddest commentaries on what we dare to call the civilisation of the nineteenth century that here at a time when we had dared to think that the world was coming to be fairly intelligent it is overrun, fairly swamped, with what the many are disposed to regard as merely a survival of old barbaric superstitions.

"It seems to me, then, that it is worthy of our careful, earnest, candid attention. If it is true, we certainly want to know it. If it is false, we want to know it, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of helping so many thousands of people out of a pitiable delusion. Liberals, at any rate, at the first blush, ought to be touched with a little feeling of sympathy towards it; for, whatever else it may be, it has proved itself the most remarkable, the most widespread, the most effective solvent of the old dogmas that the world has ever known. Educated people, those who have time for critical thought and study, can be touched and influenced by criticism, by philosophy, by science; but here is a power that has come to work through the affections as well as through the intellects of men, and at whose touch the hideous and horrible dogmas of the past have faded away, to give place, at least in other respects, to what are rational and humane ideas concerning our Father in Heaven and the destiny of His children."

When, however, an earnest, candid person wakes up to the fact that such a thing as Spiritualism exists, and proposes to study it, the chances are, unless he is more fortunate than the ordinary seeker, that he will find himself face to face with that which will repel him, will shock him, will disgust him on every hand; for, whether there be anything true in it or not, there is no sort of question that there does exist in connection with it and under cover of its name an amount of palpable and intentional fraud that is simply appalling. There is no question that there is connected with it and under cover of its name also a vast amount of honest and ignorant self-delusion. Certain strange things happen, and people at once fly to the Spiritualistic interpretation of them, although to a more careful and conservative thinker there may be no necessity whatever for any such explanation. There is, then, this amount of fraud and delusion which repels one who proposes to investigate for himself, and find out what is true. Words of too severe reprobation cannot be uttered for this side of the movement, but it ought to be said in justice that the honest and earnest believer deplors this state of things as much as anybody, and ought not to be held responsible; but the whip of public scorn and disapprobation should be applied to the multitude of impudent and deliberate cheats, tricksters, and liars, till they are whipped out of all decent human society. There are those that trade like human ghouls in the bodies of the dead. This business seems to me in all ways to be respectable compared with that of trading in human tears, in human heart break, in the tenderest and highest hopes of the human soul. I know of nothing more utterly despicable, more utterly inhuman, than this manifestation of a willingness to make money out of the sacred hopes and fears of those who are heart-broken and desolate.

There is also connected with the movement, as is charged, a vast amount of immorality of every kind. I have no sort of question that this charge is true. One thing, however,—I will not dwell upon it,—ought to be hinted as an explanation of it, as an apology for this condition of things. Always in the history of the world, when there has been a general, wide-spread breaking up of the old system of thought, when people are feeling about for an attempted readjustment with the new system, there has been this loss of a firm grip on the deep realities, the ethical principles of human nature. People have lost their old motives and have not found the new. It was true concerning early Christianity. There has not been one single charge made against Spiritualism that was not made by pagan onlookers and observers of young Christianity. It was said that their love-feasts were only drunken and dissipated orgies. And Paul tells us himself that on certain occasions, in the church of Corinth, the people were drunken at the Communion table; so that we must remember that, though these things are true, it is not the first time in the history of the world that men have passed through a similar phase of experience.

And while people still link themselves with the churches for the sake of social standing or financial gain, though they do

not believe its doctrines nor care for its spiritual prosperity, even modern Christianity cannot very safely throw stones.

I wish now to say that any critic who proposes to consider any great movement of human life or thought is in duty bound, as a fair and honest man, to judge it from its best side, to judge it at its highest.

Let us, then, consider the fact that, in spite of all I have said, there is what I may perhaps properly call a higher Spiritualism, a complete system of thought, of life, of ethics, of belief concerning God and man and destiny that is clearly wrought out. There is a vast literature that has appeared, in the last few years, setting forth belief in all these phases of opinion; and, if anyone wishes to know what it means, or what it claims to stand for on its higher side, he ought in fairness to make himself familiar with the best of its literature.

I propose to define this higher Spiritualism, not to give you my opinion of it, but to tell you what it claims for itself, what it aims to be.

What is, then, the first grand belief? Simply that death is not an end; that it is merely an experience, an incident in the onward and upward struggle and progress of the individual life. It claims to have demonstrated this, to hold it not as a hope, not as a belief, but as knowledge. It teaches that inside these gross physical bodies there is an ether body, a body that has grown with it, shaped by it, adapted to it, perfect in every part and faculty; and that this ether body is disengaged at death, like a germ delivered from its sheath, and that it goes on, the soul taking this ether body with it as a perfect equipment in every faculty for the fullest expression of its higher and better life. According to this teaching, the soul simply goes on with its power to think, to remember, to love just as of old.

It further teaches that this universe everywhere is under the law of cause and effect, and that we begin life hereafter just as we leave it here, precisely what we have made ourselves by our thoughts, our deeds, our words on earth. Therefore, this other life is not peopled with ghosts, with ghastly, thin and unreal beings, such as we have imagined in the past: they are real folks, our fathers, our mothers, our neighbours, our friends, just as we have known them here, only released from these lower physical conditions but carrying with them the same kind of character, of thought, of personality which they had here.

It also teaches that under certain peculiar conditions, there can now and then be manifestations of the reality of that life to this life; that sometimes there comes a whisper, sometimes a hand is reached across the abyss, and that they are demonstrations of the fact that those we have loved and that we talk of as lost are not lost, but are living as we are living.

This higher Spiritualism is in perfect accord with all the best scientific teaching of the world. It is in perfect accord with the finest and highest philosophy of the world. It is in perfect accord with the finest and highest moral principles that have ever been discovered. So there is nothing that we know that is contradictory to these claims of this higher Spiritualism. Therefore, whether it can demonstrate itself as true or not, it is not in contradiction with any known truth that science or philosophy has to offer, and is in perfect accord with the finest ethical teaching and the highest hopes of man. So much must be said in defence of this claim of what I have called the higher Spiritualism.

Now, I wish to offer a few suggestions of which you will see the force and drift. I speak not now as a Spiritualist. I am speaking, or trying to, as a perfectly fair and sympathetic critic from the outside. These claimed facts which Spiritualists offer us as proof of that which they declare to be true are not new facts. What is called modern Spiritualism itself is less than half a century old, but these general manifestations of a certain class and kind of facts have been reported down from the very dawn of human history. In the household of old Dr. Phelps, of Connecticut, father of Professor Phelps, of Andover, there were unquestionably certain manifestations of abnormal power that have never yet found any explanation, unless indeed they can find it here. In the home of the Wesleys there were similar manifestations continued for a long period. From almost every nation, every religion, every age, there come to us these stories of abnormal, unusual occurrences; things that usually the people have called miracles, that they were not able to explain. Now here is the point that I wish to emphasize. Are these stories, hundreds of them, told by the gravest and most reliable writers and historians of the world,—are they true? They certainly are not conscious falsehoods. Do they mean that the people who reported these

things in all ages were so little to be relied on that they should be constantly liable to this sort of delusion from the beginning of the world until now? I simply wish to say this: If I may believe in the central thought of modern Spiritualism, that fact would run a line of light, a line of sanity, back up the ages through every religion, through every nation, through every tribe, and would give me an added respect for the ability of the average man to observe and tell the truth. It would explain a thousand things that now are inexplicable. It would explain not only the Bible, but the Scriptures of all ages, and the writings of grave old Roman writers, like Livy, and almost all writers of ancient times. Brush them one side, and put them down with scorn to the credulity of man, and we must believe, what I do not like to believe, that men have been too credulous in all these ages. To believe that there was a kernel of truth in their reports would give an added respect for human nature.

Here also might be found a rational explanation of the ancient oracles, and of such claims as that made by Socrates concerning the *daimon* that was his constant attendant and teacher.

Then what a light it would throw upon the whole Bible. For the Bible, looked at from the standpoint of the rationalist, is nothing but a Spiritualistic book from beginning to end. Its entire significance is in its Spiritualism. It is full to running over with it from one cover to the other. Must we put everything there down to the wildest kind of delusion? Must we not, unless there is some ground for these beliefs? I would like to believe something a little more to the credit of these reporters.

Let me indicate to you one kind of influence it would have on my thinking. I do not believe at all in the physical resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. On the testimony contained in the New Testament, I see little cause for believing even in his spiritual reappearance. The testimony of the New Testament concerning the resurrection of Jesus, if it were paralleled by testimony in a court of justice, would not be accepted, for it is simply the anonymous testimony of people whom we cannot cross-examine as to certain very strange and wonderful things that happened nearly 2,000 years ago. One of the strangest things to me is to find people who believe in these stories told in the New Testament, but who do not believe the modern ones. For the modern ones are of precisely the same kind, and have this advantage over the old: that they have the living testimony of hundreds and thousands of credible men and women, while the old stories are no more credible on their own account than the modern ones, and have no evidence that would be allowed if it were standing simply alone.

In view—and here is what I have in mind—in view of this, if I may be permitted to believe in the visible spirit appearance of any modern man who has died, why then it would be perfectly easy and rational for me to believe that Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus. It would not seem a supernatural fact, but a perfectly natural occurrence.

And here let me remove one common prejudice. Spiritualism makes no demand on us that we believe the supernatural. At most, it is only a question of words. A spiritual world, if it exists, is as natural as the physical world. All the mightiest forces are invisible, but not therefore supernatural.

I want to mention to you, also, a thought which strikes me as being of a great deal of importance, as springing out of the doctrine of evolution, as to these modern wonders; for evolution reaches from the beginning to the end, and there is no sort of reason to suppose that its force is spent, but every reason to suppose the contrary. Note one thing of vast significance. The lowest forms of life, worms and fishes, occupy a horizontal position. They have very little development of brain, very simple nervous systems. The force of evolution has tended ever to lift from the horizontal plane up through higher forms of life, reptile, bird, mammal, till you have man perpendicular, standing on his feet, with immense development of brain and nervous power. Does evolution stop there? No, it has left the physical, ages ago. It is not producing marked changes in the structure of the body, but it seizes on the brain and the intellectual power, and raises that. It seizes on the moral, the ethical nature of man, until to-day, as I have had occasion more than once to tell you, the ethical ideal is mightier than any physical or intellectual force in all the world. But it did not stop there. It seized the spiritual nature of man; and now it would seem to me in perfect accord with the scientific doctrine of evolution to suppose that we may reach still higher yet,—that there is to be a grand, a free, a widespread and general



development of the spiritual nature of man. If so, then it will be in perfect accord with this teaching that there should have been sporadic and occasional manifestations of this in the past ages of the world, leading up to the moment of its more general recognition.

One other point I must notice and emphasise a little. It seems to me that a great many people are intellectually confused as to the choice they must make between the two great theories of life. There are people who put aside any claims to proof in this direction or that as bearing upon the spiritual nature of man, and yet cling to their own belief in his spiritual nature, illogically and without any proof whatever. We are presented with two theories, and we cannot choose a little of one and a little of the other. One or the other is certainly true. One theory is the materialistic. In accordance with that, human life, any intelligent life, is merely a passing, transitory stage, of no more permanent existence than these blossoms that now surround me. Humanity itself, its brain, its heart, its life, its hope, its Jesus, its Shakespeare, its Buddha, all the great names of the world, are only curious and strange manifestations of this material world, blossoming as the plants blossom, fading as the plants fade. On that theory—think a moment what it means—the world, all the past of the world, is a desert, darkness, a black abyss, just behind us—nothing. All who have ever lived have been blotted out, and all that great array of figures are only fancies of a dream. And before us what? Night and the dark again. We live, we think, we feel for a little while, and that is the end. Here is this world of ours, with just a few generations that are now peopling it, sailing through space, and this is all; and, when one drops out, he drops into everlasting nothingness. That is one theory. It does not commend itself to me, either to my intellect or to my heart.

The other theory is what? It is that spirit and life are first, supreme; that spirit shaped and controls form, that form only expresses spirit. Why, I have had a dozen bodies since I was born into this life. There is nothing that I know of in any science to make it unreasonable to believe that after the fact which we call death I may still go on clothed with a body as real as this. This theory teaches us that the universe is all alive. Young, the great scientist who discovered what has been the universally accepted theory of light, who lived just a little after Sir Isaac Newton's time, recognised as one of the most acute and profound thinkers of the world, put it forth as a speculation merely,—he did not claim anything more,—that for anything science knew to the contrary—we now see hints that look that way—there might be no end of living, pulsing, throbbing worlds all around us, a spiritual system of which we are the material counterpart.

At any rate, we must choose between the theory of materialism and a Spiritualistic theory. If the Spiritualistic theory be true, then death is not the end. I may hope to find my friends once more; and it is quite natural that the spiritual natures of certain susceptible ones of the race should become developed so that they are capable of receiving communications from the other side from those who attempt to come into communication with them. Does that not seem to you perfectly natural? If there be such a thing as a spiritual world, if my father is alive, if your brother, sister, husband, wife is alive, and if they are not very far away, would it not be the most natural thing in the world for them to try, at any rate, to reach you?

I propose now to hint to you a few words as to the proof of these claims which Spiritualists offer. One thing is significant, and is immensely to the credit of this higher Spiritualism. It does not ask anybody to believe with his eyes shut. It does not ask anybody to take the statement of the most truthful person on the face of the earth. It offers, or claims to offer, no end of facts as proved; and it asks you to investigate, and believe or reject on the basis of these claims. I say it is immensely to the credit of this higher Spiritualism that it should put itself on this purely scientific basis as being perfectly in accord with the tendencies and movement of the modern world.

You are familiar in a general way with the kind of facts that are offered as proof. They are spoken of lightly, sometimes sneered at. It has been said, Even suppose a physical body is lifted up or moved by a force that has apparently no connection with the muscular power of any people present—I have heard this spoken of and sneered at a thousand times,—suppose it is, what of it? One of the most learned men of this country has given this hint as to what of it. I repeat it from him. He makes this point. Everything in this world, so far as we know, if let alone,

tends downward under the force of universal gravity. There is no power known in Heaven or earth that is capable of lifting even a pin against this force of gravity except the power of intelligent will. If, therefore, it should happen, if it should be demonstrated, that there is any such force that is capable of doing this, there would be the Rubicon, the very dividing line between materialism and Spiritualism, absolute demonstration that here is intelligent will at work. I give you this as quotation, not verbally, but the idea, as expressing the opinion of one of the most learned men in this country as to the significance of such a fact, supposing it ever occurred. And I say to you frankly, in passing, that I am convinced that such facts have occurred and do occur.

I cannot, at this time, even hint at the many proofs that the Spiritualists offer. You can find them for yourselves. You may, however, be interested if I give you one or two brief hints of things which have come under my own observation and which have filled me with most restless and eager questioning.

There has been in the modern world a manifestation in these last few years of certain strange powers on the part of mind as already embodied such as was not recognised or given any place in science until the last half-century. As I told you last Sunday, a French scientific commission investigated hypnotism and pronounced it all humbug. To-day there is not a competent scientific man who does not recognise its truth. There used to be once great incredulity as to the existence of clairvoyance and clairaudience. To-day, I venture to say there is no person of competent intelligence, who has investigated the matter, who does not believe that these powers exist. It was once believed that there could be no such thing as communication on the part of one mind with another, except through recognised physical media. The idea would have been scorned and flouted a few years ago. I venture here again to say that there is probably not a man of competent intelligence, who has given it careful and earnest investigation, who does not believe in telepathy, or mind-reading—the possibility of minds communicating with each other without much regard to space, providing the conditions and circumstances are favourable.

These do not prove Spiritualism at all, but note this one thing. It proves that there has been a tremendous increase and widening of the recognition of the powers of the human mind. They prove what appears to be, at least, a semi-independence of the recognised physical faculties of communication. What kind of mind is this that can manifest itself to another 1,000 miles away? Something different from the old idea of mind that used to be generally entertained. Phenomena like these have become so familiar to me that they are no more wonderful now than the telegraph and the telephone. I cannot explain the telegraph and the telephone, but I know they are true. I cannot explain these things, but I know they are true.

But one step more I will hint. Something else has occurred in my experience which puzzles me beyond all words to express. I have no place for it in any scientific theory with which I am acquainted; I do not know what to do with it. In the presence of a personal friend, only two being in the room, I have had communication made to me of certain things occurring at the very instant in another State. Where did it come from? How? I do not know. I simply know that science, according to its present development, has nothing whatever to say to facts like these; it has no place to put them, and must widen its theories before it can account for them. Of course, if I were ready to accept all the claims put forth on the behalf of modern Spiritualism, I should naturally explain these facts in the light of that theory. I frankly say I do not know of any other theory that even promises an explanation.

Perfect candour and fairness compel me to say that some of these communications have about them such traces of the identity of the "spirits" claiming to communicate as fill me with surprise. I have never counted as evidence of "spirit" activity anything a "medium" might tell me which I already knew. I have said, This may be mind-reading. But, over and over again, until it is commonplace, I have had thus told me things which it was impossible the psychic should ever have known.

But when, as on several occasions, I am told things that neither myself nor the psychic knew, ever did know, or ever could have known, so far as I could possibly discover, then I know not what to say unless I am to suppose the presence and activity of some invisible intelligence. But were that proved, it would still remain to prove that this intelligence was once embodied as man or woman.

Here, then, I rest. I am in no hurry. The one thing, the only thing that any sane man can desire is the truth. It seems to me the most foolhardy of all things for any man to object to a fact. If it is a fact, then it is only folly to object; for if indeed it be a fact it will remain a fact after you have objected your life long. The only sane search in the world, then, is for truth. I am so anxious to find the truth that I cannot afford to make up my mind too readily. I must pause, I must wait. I must not only think certain things probable, but I must know they are true.

But this much I will say. It seems to me due to the claims of this higher Spiritualism to say that if I should ever come to accept the central claim of Spiritualism, I cannot see wherein it would change my belief, scientific, philosophic, ethical, practical, one whit. What would it do? It would simply place under my feet a rock, demonstrated to be a rock instead of a hope; a trust—a great and glorious belief.

If this higher faith of Spiritualism should ever be universal accepted, what would follow? It would abolish death. It would make you know that the loved are not lost, though they have gone before you. It would make any human life here, whatever its poverty, disease, or sorrow, worth while, because of the grand possibility of the outlook. It would give victory over sorrow, over heart-break, over tears. It would make one master not only of death, but of life. It would make him feel sure that he was building up, day by day here, the character that he was to carry with him on to that next level of the ascent that is never to cease, but eternally to come nearer and nearer to God.

I then frankly say to you, friends, that, while I am so anxious to find the truth that I wish to know that the dust is the end of me, if it is, I would certainly rather believe that it is not. I would rather believe that we are forming the beginning of associations here which are to be eternal. I would not like only to listen to, but to believe, the whisper that comes down out of the infinite light: "There shall be no more death."

#### WESLEY A FAITH HEALER.

"He related cures wrought by his faith and his prayers, which he considered and represented as positively miraculous. By thinking strongly on a text of Scripture which promised that these signs should follow those that believe, and by calling on Christ to increase his faith and confirm the word of His grace, he shook off instantaneously, he says, a fever which had hung upon him for some days, and was in a moment freed from all pain and restored to his former strength. He visited a believer at night who was not expected to live till the morning; the man was speechless and senseless, and his pulse gone. 'A few of us,' says Wesley, 'immediately joined in prayers. I relate the naked fact. Before we had done his senses and his speech returned. Now, he that will account for this by natural causes has my free leave. But I choose to say, this is the power of God.' So, too, when his own teeth ached, he prayed, and the pain left him. And this faith was so strong, that it sufficed sometimes to cure, not only himself, but his horse also. 'My horse,' he says, 'was so exceedingly lame, that I was afraid I must have lain by. We could not discern what it was that was amiss, and yet he would scarce set his foot to the ground. By riding thus seven miles I was thoroughly tired, and my head ached more than it had done for some months. What I here aver is the naked fact: let every man account for it as he sees good. I then thought 'Cannot God heal either man or beast, by any means, or without any?' Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. Nor did he halt any more either that day or the next. A very odd accident this also."—SOUTHEY'S *Wesley* Re-edited.

THERE is among us a society, the aims of which are thus set forth. Its name is the Spiritual Science Society, and its president is Mr. Alan Montgomery, author of *Soul Symbols*:—

"The Spiritual Science Society has peculiar objects; they are, 'To bring to practical use the knowledge of the spiritual sciences, for the benefit of mankind generally, for mutual improvement, and through the medical sciences in particular to apply the spiritual sciences to the relief of diseases both mental and physical; to demonstrate and apply the higher phenomena of the mind, generally known as abnormal or occult, to the study of the fine arts, viz., sculpture, painting, literature, and music.'"

"THIS religion (Buddhism) which, on account of its intrinsic excellence and truth, as well as of the great number of its followers, may be considered as ranking highest among all religions upon earth, prevails throughout the greater part of Asia, and according to the latest investigation, Spence Hardy numbers 369,000,000 of believers, that is, far more than any other."—SCHOPENHAUER'S *Will in Nature*.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

The Rev. Charles Voysey's Estimate of Spiritualism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In a letter of mine published in "LIGHT," May 4th inst., I alluded to the work now being carried on by the Rev. Charles Voysey, and, thinking it would interest him, I sent that gentleman a copy of your paper, and wrote him a short note saying that I had done so. In return, he forwarded me a printed copy of a sermon delivered by him May 2nd, 1886, and wrote, saying, "I don't wish to tread on people's corns needlessly, but I have good reasons for standing aloof from Spiritualism in theory and in practice." Now, sir, I think, as Spiritualists, we can honestly claim that we are always ready "to give a reason for the belief that is in us." There is no "mystery" about our faith: a thing to be accepted as true because the Church or the Bible tells us it is so. I can honestly say for my part that I would walk 100 miles to-morrow to meet any person who I felt sure could convince me that Spiritualism is false; and why? Because I have no wish to "hold a lie in my right hand." There is no very great honour to be gained in professing and calling oneself a Spiritualist: all that belongs to the churches as yet: neither is it altogether pleasant to be thought a fool for believing in spirit-communion, whether by Mr. Voysey and his congregation, or other people, and yet that this is so anyone who reads Mr. Voysey's sermon will see at a glance, I fancy. In the hope, then, of proving that "there are more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in even his philosophy," I venture to ask space for this letter; not thinking for one moment that it is needed by Spiritualists, but hoping that it may commend itself to Mr. Voysey's congregation as a plain, straightforward answer to the statements put forward in the sermon he has sent me.

Mr. Voysey writes as follows:—

"We have now to consider briefly the grounds for the hope of a life after death offered by Spiritualism.

"Spiritualism occupies a very different field from that of Christianity which bases its hopes on a pseudo-historical fact and on the promises of an historical person, recorded in a book believed to be infallible. On the other hand, Spiritualism professes and claims to prove by experiment and demonstration that the dead are still alive and are in actual communication with the living and in some cases have been really seen by them. It is not my intention now to dwell on the voluminous mass of so-called evidence, or to hold up to scorn the convictions of those who have experienced certain phenomena which they explain in a way that suits themselves. Nor need I do more than allude to the mass of fraud and imposture mixed up with it and which none can bewail more bitterly than the honest Spiritualists themselves. All that concerns our inquiry is, whether there is any truth or fact at all in the alleged communications with the dead. And, granting that there is any, however little, whether it be any help at all to our hope for a life after death.

"The former of these inquiries is not one which can be answered out of hand except by a categorical denial which would be no refutation. The only way of meeting it is by satisfactorily explaining the alleged phenomena without invoking the aid of the spirits of the dead at all. Ghost stories of sight and sound are no new marvels in the world. Necromancy has been practised in various climes in all the ages. And I think we may well admit that some of the phenomena are real, and it is only with these that we have to do. Dr. Carpenter solved all the cases brought before him by the theory of unconscious cerebration. To those who have had any experience among the morbid and the insane, illusions and self-delusions of the most extravagant kind are perfectly familiar, and require no explanation. What the patient sees, or believes that he sees, whether it be a blue dog or the ghost of his wife or child, is a creation of his own brain, which, through disease, throws images upon the retina by the irritation of the optic nerve. The blue dog or the ghost is sadly real to him, but they have no existence objective and external to himself, else the objects would be seen likewise by persons in the same room with him.

"Now, that the brain or imagination of persons apparently sane and perhaps really so is capable of being excited to an abnormal degree, under given conditions, is also a well-known fact; and indeed is the means of accounting for truly honest men bearing witness that they have seen something which absolutely could not occur. Men good and true coming together into a closed room, the lights being nearly extinguished, coming there, I say, with a fixed purpose and a common expectation of seeing marvels, place themselves deliberately in conditions in which an abnormal excitement of the imaginative and nervous system is inevitable. What they may see and hear under such conditions, whether real or not, cannot be testified to or proved by their own assertions in such a way as would be necessary to carry evidence to a judge and jury. There is one test which could be applied, and which has not yet been ventured upon. Let the room in which Spiritualistic phenomena are to be manifested be surrounded with, say, twelve apertures which would enable twelve individuals to see everything which went on in the room without being seen themselves and



without communication with each other. Each one of these twelve observers is to be locked up in a separate cell and not allowed to come out till he had written down his own faithful record of what he saw. Then, if all agreed in their reports, it would be next to impossible to doubt their accuracy and truthfulness. The proviso being always rigidly observed that they were beyond the reach of any mesmeric influence from the assembly during their secret observation and absolutely separated from each other. If any spirits of the dead appeared under these conditions, then we should be able to answer our first question as to whether there be any truth or fact in the alleged communication with the dead.

"But I have a far more powerful argument wherewith to show the utter uselessness of these ghosts in furnishing grounds for our hope. The theory refutes itself. It is an endeavour to blend the corporeal and the spiritual in a way which does not commend itself to reason, but even to reduce the spiritual to the corporeal. By the very terms 'soul' and 'spirit,' we always mean something absolutely invisible, intangible, imponderable, &c., &c. All that is *visible* in us, we know, *dies* and in time is dissolved—the only part of us which we believe and hope will never die, but live on after the death of the body, is the *invisible* part, the part which we have never yet seen in ourselves or in others and never can see, because it is *spirit* and not matter. I take this to be common-sense and universally admitted. But Spiritualism steps in and nullifies all that, stultifying her own pretensions by claiming to make that *visible* which is by nature *invisible* and which *reason* tells us can only become visible by ceasing to be *spirit*. That is what provokes my opposition to Spiritualism; in that it professes to exhibit to mortal eyes and to see with mortal eyes that which our whole higher instincts and our experience postulate as *invisible*. And to make matters worse, the pure and incorporeal spirit does not appear in its native beauty but must needs be draped in Manchester goods like the grosser bodies of this mortal life. This, to me, is the ultimatum of the absurdity and incredibility of the ghost theory. Our conception of the human soul must have fallen to degradation indeed before such ideas can have become possible. The exigencies of decency are such as, of course, to prohibit the appearance of nude figures in an assembly of respectable men and women; but how is it that this anomaly has not struck the minds of intelligent Spiritualists and led them to ask themselves, how, in the name of common-sense, can spirits which have no form require clothes?"

"Nothing surely is wanting to show that the ghost theory is not yet demonstrated to the satisfaction of reasonable men. If more were needed, we have only to add that nothing about the life after death has ever been revealed by these spirits which could not easily have been imagined by any human mind, even by that of a very poor specimen. If we were to accept a tithe of what is told us by these poor wanderers from the tomb, I, for one, should give up my hope of a life to come and see what I could do to evade it. My life's aspirations have been so immeasurably above their representations of the next world, that their testimony refutes itself. For what is to be must be at least as good as what is, and we doubt not far better. It cannot possibly sink such depths below it.

"Christianity and Spiritualism, then, give no ground for hopes of a life after death such as we Theists devoutly entertain. What our ground of hope is, I shall look forward to expounding next Sunday."

And first of all let me say that I have inserted herein all that Mr. Voysey thought proper to say of Spiritualism in the sermon alluded to, and I think we may fairly claim that it contains pretty well all he *can* say against it, and what does it amount to? Let us see.

He first of all states most correctly what it is we as Spiritualists claim to be true, viz., "that those called dead are still alive, are in actual communication with the living, and in some cases have been actually seen by them." He then alludes to the "voluminous mass of so-called evidence" in regard to certain phenomena experienced by us, which he declares we explain in a way that suits us, and further on he states that what we have seen or heard of such phenomena cannot be testified to or proved by our assertions in a way that would carry evidence to a judge or jury. Now this, to say the least, is rather a bold assertion on the part of Mr. Voysey, and seeing that his congregation depend upon him to set before them the truth so far as he is able, I think that, even supposing he has no desire to learn the truth about such matters himself, yet out of respect for his hearers he is in duty bound to make himself acquainted with a small portion of the enormous amount of evidence in regard to Spiritualism put forward weekly in the columns of your paper. Why, sir, there is enough on one page of it alone (say page 220 of your last number) to convince any intelligent person, willing to be convinced, of the truth of spirit-communion, and who will accept as true that which would be sworn to by thousands of his fellow-creatures just as intelligent as himself. Surely Mr. Voysey cannot be bold enough, or rash enough, to declare that "all men are liars" except himself (and fools also), and yet he openly states that good men and true who meet together for the express purpose of investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism place themselves deliberately in a condition that unfits

them for making such investigation, and consequently what they tell us in regard to the same is false and unreliable.

I will not occupy your space by giving a list of the names of men distinguished beyond the majority of their fellows for knowledge who have borne testimony to the truth of spirit-communion, but would recommend those who take an interest in the subject to procure a copy of your paper and study it for themselves; at the same time I venture to lay before Mr. Voysey and the members of his church the following testimony, printed and published by Professor Crookes, F.R.S., and Gold Medallist, in which he states as follows:—

"Katie (the spirit) never appeared to greater perfection, and for nearly two hours she walked about the room conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took my arm when walking, and the impression conveyed to my mind that it was a living woman by my side, instead of a visitor from the other world, was so strong that I asked permission to examine still more closely, &c. During the week before Katie took her departure she gave sances almost nightly to enable me to photograph her by artificial light. Five complete sets of photographic apparatus were accordingly fited up for the purpose, which were all brought to bear upon Katie at the same time. Each evening there were three or four exposures of plates in the five cameras, giving at least fifteen separate pictures at each sance. Altogether I have forty-four negatives, some inferior, some indifferent, and some excellent."

Professor Crookes concludes as follows:—

"To imagine that an innocent school-girl of fifteen (the medium through whose magnetism Katie was able to manifest) should be able to conceive and then successfully carry out for three years so gigantic an imposture as this (which some declare it to be), and during that time should cheerfully submit to every test I thought it right to impose upon her, and that I should not have discovered the imposition, does more violence to one's reason and common-sense than to believe that that which I now state is true."

It must be borne in mind that these investigations were carried out almost entirely at Professor Crookes's private residence, and that only his own special friends, not interested in playing the fool with him, were present; it must also be noticed that when he commenced his investigations he fully expected to detect and expose a fraud or a delusion, as is the case with nearly every other investigator at the commencement; so that it is altogether wrong to say that "we meet for the express purpose of seeing marvels," for when we see the phenomena they are no longer marvels to us, and until we do so we do not believe in the possibility of such things happening.

Mr. Voysey would have us believe that what we see, or think we see, is caused by mesmerism, and, therefore, that all the thousands of honest Spiritualists in different parts of the world have simply been fooled into believing that which is not true; but by whom, I ask, and for what earthly purpose if spirit-communion is not true? Strange that all these people, sane enough in other respects, should go mad over the attempt to demonstrate the truth of the life beyond the grave! Festus said the same thing of Paul, but that did not make it true.

But say that we are all mesmerised—how about the photographic apparatus? Was that mesmerised, too? or did the school-girl of fifteen mesmerise the learned professor and his attendants, then take forty-four negatives of herself (or some other person), and afterwards persuade Professor Crookes and his friends that this was the portrait of the spirit that "walked about the room for two hours conversing familiarly with those present"? Mr. Voysey may believe this marvel if he likes, but I confess I don't.

And now a few words in regard to what Mr. Voysey does believe in connection with this subject. He says: "All that concerns our inquiry is, whether there is any truth or fact at all in the alleged communications with the dead. . . The only way of meeting this question is by satisfactorily explaining the alleged phenomena without invoking the aid of the spirits of the dead at all. Ghost stories of sight and sound are no new marvels in the world. Necromancy has been practised in various climes in all the ages. I think we may well admit that some of the phenomena are real, and it is only with these that we have to do." "Ghost stories!" What does Mr. Voysey wish us to understand by this passage? Is it that there are no such things as ghosts? Why then allude to them to account for "real phenomena"? On the other hand, are there such things? Then they help to prove the truth of spirit communion.

But, "Necromancy has been practised in all the ages," he tells us, as in the case of Saul and Samuel; and what is necromancy if not communication with the so-called dead? This is what Walker's dictionary declares it to be, at any rate.

I pass by what he says about "blue dogs" and so on, because these, as he tells, are only fancied creations of the brain

among the morbid and insane, whilst we are dealing with real phenomena witnessed to by "men good and true," and I pass on to what he calls "a far more powerful argument" against our belief in Spiritualism, viz., "that by the very terms soul and spirit we always mean something absolutely invisible, intangible, imponderable, &c., &c." Now this may be Mr. Voysey's idea in regard to spirit, but it is not ours, at any rate not mine. If our souls, or spirits, are absolutely invisible, &c., what becomes of us in the next life? Are we to pass a whole eternity absolutely invisible to each other? Why, sir, Mr. Voysey's logic destroys the future life in place of revealing it as he claims to do in his sermon, for that which is absolutely invisible, intangible, and imponderable cannot by any possibility exist at all. To say that it does so is to contradict his other statement. He will perhaps reply that he means invisible to mortal eyes like ours, and here we go with him as far as this, that at present the majority of persons are unable to see spirits, just as we are unable to see the animalculæ in a drop of water, but the animalculæ are there all the same, and the spirits are all around us, a "great cloud of witnesses," although we cannot all see them, but this shall not be so always, for we are promised that the time will come (and I believe it is not far distant) when they will stand on the public platform and address us in regard to the life hereafter; and I believe also that this is what Jesus meant when He said—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Mr. Voysey becomes facetious when he talks about the "pure spirit being draped in Manchester goods," although a little further on he admits that "the exigencies of decency prohibit the appearance of nude figures in our midst." But granted that spirits can come back and "walk about amongst us," is it too much to suppose that the power which enables them to do this is able to provide them with some sort of clothing also?

Mr. Voysey's speculations in regard to Spiritualism will do well enough for those who do not care to think for themselves, and who are content to take what he says for truth because he tells them it is so, but this will not always be the case, and I believe the time is coming when all thoughtful persons will admit the truth of spirit-intercourse, and will wonder at our having been so long in finding it out. Can anything be more in accordance with common-sense, taking the most practical view of this question, than to suppose that if there be any hereafter, the God Who guides and governs all should make it known in this manner? Why Christianity declares that He has done so in the resurrection of Jesus, and I believe it to be true.

We are sometimes asked, What is the good of it even if it be true?

There is no difficulty in answering this question when put in a calm and thoughtful spirit. To such an one we reply, is it nothing to you to know that your aged mother, or loving sister, or fond, devoted wife, whose earthly body you have "buried out of your sight," is still with you as much, aye more, than ever? Would the fact of realising such presence be likely to check a man when about to do that which his conscience tells him is wrong? I think so. Would the intending murderer slay his victim if he felt satisfied that "dead men could tell tales"? Instead of asking what good does it do, I ask what harm can it do if rightly used. There is not a blessing we enjoy that may not be turned to an evil purpose if we are so minded, and we Spiritualists "carry our treasure in earthen vessels," as Paul reminds us, and too often "give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme" in consequence of our folly. May God give us grace so to use the blessing of spirit-communion in future "that men may see our good works, developed and purified thereby, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven."

T. L. HENLY.

#### Consciousness versus Being.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Allow me space just to suggest to "1st M.B. (Lond.)" that he may perhaps find the way to my position in this matter by quitting the concrete for the abstract and conning the Kabalistic definition of original Being (or God):—"God is at once the thinker, the thought, and the thing thought of." Not one of these *plus* the others, but all these in such a way that the negation of one would involve the negation of the whole. And so, it seems to me, with Consciousness and Being. Their relation is such that his syllogism does not apply to them, since they are, in reality, but different terms for, or rather different aspects of, one and the same entity.

If I am to give up the term "Consciousness" to denote that property in virtue of which anything either acts or is acted upon, I am entitled to be supplied with another. Will "1st M. B. (Lond.)" oblige me with a satisfactory substitute? Until this is done I have no choice but to read the syllogism of Descartes, "*Cogito, ergo sum*," both ways, and maintain not only that "I am, because I am conscious," but also that "I am conscious, because I am."

EDWARD MAITLAND.

#### SOCIETY WORK.

[Correspondents who send us notices of the work of the Societies with which they are associated, will oblige by writing as distinctly as possible and by appending their signatures to their communications. Inattention to these requirements often compels us to reject their contributions.]

LONDON SPIRITUALIST FEDERATION.—A combined open air meeting will be held in Hyde Park, on Sunday next, near the Marble Arch. Messrs. Lees, Drake, Emmis, Hopcroft, and others will address the meeting.—J. VEITCH, Sec., 44, Coleman-road, Peckham.

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.—On Sunday last Mr. Humphries gave us a pleasing lecture upon "Immortality." The audience was a large one. On Sunday next Mr. Dever Summers will speak on "The Soul of Things."—M. GIFFORD, Sec.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.—We had good attendances on Sunday last to hear Mr. Lees' very able addresses. The morning subject, "Conditions and Mediumship," was especially interesting to Spiritualists. On Sunday next Mr. J. Veitch and Mr. J. Hopcroft at 7 p.m.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec.

MARYLEBONE ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS, 24, HARCOURT-STREET.—A good audience assembled on Sunday evening last to hear the excellent lecture on "Faith Healing," by Mr. J. Macdonald. Next Sunday at seven o'clock, Mr. W. E. Long will lecture on "Spiritual Manifestations." Friends and strangers invited. Other meetings as last week.—C. J. H.

ZEPHYR HALL, 9, BEDFORD-GARDENS, SILVER-STREET, NOTTING HILL GATE.—On Sunday evening last we had a good address by Mrs. Treadwell, upon "The Evils of the Church." The speaker reviewed some of the popular teachings, and endeavoured to prove the superiority of the teachings of Spiritualism. Next Sunday at 7 p.m., Mr. Robert J. Lees; Wednesday at 8 p.m., séance, at 34, Cornwall-road, medium Mrs. Treadwell; Friday at 8 p.m., séance at 16, Dartmoor-street, Notting Hill Gate. Social gathering, Monday, June 3rd, at eight. In the Kensal-road, near the cemetery wall, on Sunday morning last, Mr. J. Hopcroft addressed a large gathering.—W. O. DRAKE, Hon. Sec.

KING'S CROSS SPIRITUALISTIC CHURCH, 184, COPENHAGEN-STREET, N.—Our morning meeting on Sunday last was opened by Dr. J. Bowles Daly, with an address on "The Development of Clairvoyance." After narrating some of his interesting experiences as a clairvoyant, the speaker recommended the use of a globe of water, with a light set behind it, (as explained in a recent issue of "LIGHT") as an aid to development, and invited suggestions from the audience. Discussion followed. In the evening the chairman spoke briefly upon the principles of Spiritualism, followed by an address from Miss Blennin on "The Trinity." Next Sunday at 10.45 a.m., experiments in animal magnetism; at 6.45, Mr. Butcher will be the speaker.—S. T. R.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JUSTICE F.T.S., H. VENMAN, E. MAITLAND, "LIBRA," "NIZIDA."—Next week; quite full now.

F. B. O. (Newcastle), writes some hearty words of commendation of "LIGHT" as "an honest exponent of the truth, fair and impartial." We thank our friend. "LIGHT" is increasingly valued, and looked up to as at least illuminative.

#### THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

2, DUKE-STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

This Society of Spiritualists, founded for the purpose primarily, of uniting those who share a common faith, and then of giving information respecting that faith to those who seek for it, has now occupied Chambers at the above address. There will be found an extensive Library of works especially attractive to Spiritualists, the various Journals of Spiritualism published in this and other countries; and opportunities of converse with friends like-minded. The Alliance holds periodical meetings at which papers on interesting phases of the subject are read, and discussion is invited. Donations solicited.

[One or more Members of Council attend on Tuesday evenings in each week, from Five to Seven (excepting on the Second Tuesday in each Month, when the hour is from Six to Seven) to receive friends and answer inquiries.]

Minimum Annual Subscription of Members and Associates, One Guinea, payable in advance, and on the 1st January in each year. Further particulars may be obtained from B. D. GODFREY, Librarian on the premises, or of

MORELL THEOBALD, Hon. Sec.

62, Granville Park, Blackheath, S.E.